

Millions of veterans and their families who depend on VA benefits will benefit from increased funding in the bill, which provides \$120.8 billion for VA, an increase of \$11.2 billion over fiscal year 2010.

Combined with legislation passed since January 2007, this bill would mean a total increase of \$27 billion for veteran programs, or a 70 percent increase.

"I'm honored to sit on the subcommittee that oversees funding for VA programs, and I'm pleased at the work being done this year," said Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel), who holds a seat on the subcommittee that approved the legislation. "The work Democrats have done to support veterans since 2007 is amazing, an increase of nearly 70 percent in funding. Finally we're fulfilling the promise to our veterans."

The fiscal year 2011 bill would include funding for 4,000 additional permanent claims processors—an increase of almost 25 percent—who will target the growing backlog of VA claims, which now total about 1 million each year.

Here is a partial list of key funding numbers for fiscal year 2011:

- The Veterans Health Administration would be funded at \$48.8 billion.
- \$5.2 billion would be dedicated to mental health services.
- Homeless veteran services would see funding totaling \$4.2 billion for 2011, \$800 million homeless programs and \$3.4 billion for medical services.
- \$250 million would be set aside to increase access for veterans in rural areas.
- Medical research programs would see \$590 million, including funds to address critical needs of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans.
- Another \$5.7 billion would be dedicated to maintenance needs for VA medical facilities.

The subcommittee markup that took place on July 14 will be followed by a full Appropriations Committee markup, which will happen in the near future. Then, the full House will debate the bill. The Senate has also started its process for moving VA funding.

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